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**TEACHING PRACTICES WHICH ENHANCE RHYTHM
DEVELOPMENT IN JUNIOR PRIMARY STUDENTS.**

**CASE STUDIES IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF WESTERN
AUSTRALIA.**

By

Natalie Oddy

Bachelor of Education (Hons)

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of
Bachelor of Education with Honours,
Faculty of Regional Professional Studies, Edith Cowan University

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis has arisen from a desire to enhance the benefits of musical development, in particular, rhythm, for children in junior primary classrooms. Music plays an important role in the overall development of the child as it "aids a child's development in other areas such as overall academic achievement, ability to concentrate, creative and artistic expression, social skills and emotional stability" (Parkinson, 1989, p. 3). Therefore music education plays an important part in the academic curriculum. The researcher selected rhythm as the element of music to focus on as it is "the most basic element of music" (Latham and Sadie, 1985, p. 17).

The case study methodology was used with the study of three primary school music specialists and one primary school classroom teacher who were each observed teaching two rhythm-based lessons to a Year One or Year Two class. On two separate occasions the teachers were observed on their teaching approaches and the activities in which the students were engaged. The two forms of data collection, interview and observation provided a thorough perspective on the strategies which the four teachers used to enhance rhythm development in their junior primary classrooms.

The results of the study of four cases identified trends in the teachers' strategies, although, their personal styles varied markedly. There were fifteen processes identified which highlighted the major teaching strategies used to teach rhythm to Year One and Year Two children. The processes are: the use of rhythmic songs; the use of rhythmic games; progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms; concrete to abstract application activities; activities which are developmentally appropriate; relevant activities; practical work; modelling;

scaffolding; use of visual teaching aids; problem solving strategies; repetition; gaining the students prior knowledge; positive and specific feedback; and establishing the framework for success. These teaching practices are consistent with much of the established research on the topic of rhythm development in music.

The outcomes of this research have implications for both music educators and classroom teachers who are interested in teaching strategies which enhance rhythm development. In studying the teaching practices which enhance musical development in the area of rhythm, this research will contribute to our understanding of how classroom teachers and music specialists might improve their own practices and foster children's sense of rhythm and rhythm skills.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. Incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education
- ii. Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text, or
- iii. Contain any defamatory material.

Signature *[Handwritten Signature]*

Date

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Thanks to God for with him I can do all things.

My love and thanks to my husband, David. For the first two years of our married life this thesis has been with us. Your support through the process was a continual strength.

To my family, thank you for your faithful prayers. Your sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. Mums, Dads and Chantell thank you for your endless belief, love and support of me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background to the study	1
Research question	2
Significance of the study	2
Structure of thesis	3
 Chapter 2: Literature review	 5
Developmental theories	5
Theories of rhythm development	8
Teaching strategies and rhythm development	10
 Chapter 3: Methodology	 15
Why use the case study method?	15
Limitations and strengths of the case study method	17
Data collection	18
Interview	19
Observation	20
The role of the researcher	22
The teachers	23
Mrs Strong	23
Mrs Acton	25
Mrs Dawson	26
Mrs Membery	27
Ethical procedures	28
Harm	28
Consent	29
Deception and secrecy	29
Confidentiality	29
General	29

Chapter 4:	Data analyses	30
	Rhythmic songs	30
	Rhythm games	31
	Progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms	32
	Concrete to abstract application activities	33
	Developmentally appropriate activities	33
	Relevant activities	34
	Practical work	35
	Modelling	36
	Scaffolded learning	36
	Visual teaching aids	37
	Problem solving strategies	37
	Repetition	38
	Prior knowledge	39
	Positive and specific feedback	39
	Establishing the framework for success	40
Chapter 5:	Conclusion	42
	Study findings and conclusions	42
	Implications for teachers	43
	Recommendations for further research	44
	References	46
	Bibliography	51
	Appendices	56
	Appendix 1: Letter of interest	57
	Appendix 2: Letter of involvement	58
	Appendix 3: Teacher interview	59
	Appendix 4: Overview of research given to cases	60
	Appendix 5: Observation record sheet	62

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to identify teaching strategies used to develop rhythm in selected junior primary classrooms. This chapter will provide a background to the study which shows a definition of rhythm, the intent of the research, an explanation of why junior primary teachers were chosen as the research focus group and the use of case study methodology. The research question is derived from the research topic, which is through research determining a best practice model for teaching rhythm with junior primary students. The significance of the study indicates the value of this research in contributing to the body of knowledge regarding the more effective ways of teaching rhythm in junior primary classrooms. Finally the structure of the thesis is overviewed.

Background to the study

Spence states that “rhythm is that feature of music concerned with duration of sound ... rhythm therefore involves duration, meter, accent and tempo” (1981, pp. 233-234). Through the observations, the researcher aimed to gain a holistic perspective on what is taking place in the classroom in rhythm lessons. Therefore the observations were not based on one particular aspect of rhythm.

Research indicates that the development of creativity is most effective in the initial years of primary school in combination with best practice teaching methods.

Parkinson claims, “the first seven years are the most important for laying down the foundations of a musical education” (1989, p. 3).

This research focused on significant ways in which rhythm is taught and how teachers facilitated maximum learning outcomes for children in junior primary classes. Four case studies were conducted concerning teacher practice in the South West region of Western Australia. Three of the teachers were music specialists and one was a classroom teacher. By observing the ways in which these teachers developed rhythm and how children responded, the researcher was able to draw conclusions concerning teaching strategies which assist students to develop their rhythmic skills.

Research question

The research question which will be addressed is:

What strategies are teachers using to enhance rhythm development in junior primary students?

This question will be addressed through the analysis of interviews and observations of four case studies in the South West region of Western Australia.

Significance of the study

The researcher selected rhythm as the element of music to focus on as it is "the most basic element of music" (Latham & Sadie, 1985, p. 17). At present there appears to be little research in the field describing the most effective ways of teaching rhythm in junior primary classrooms. Findlay declared "of the three elements of music - rhythm, melody and harmony - rhythm has received the least attention from the theorists, yet it is indisputably the basic element without which there is no musical art" (1971, p. 1). The results of this study aim to provide insights for music specialists and classroom teachers as to more effective ways in which to teach children rhythm in their developmental years.

Jerome Bruner asserted “the first objective of any act of learning ... is that it should serve us in the future. Learning should not only take us somewhere it should allow us later to go further more easily” (cited in Colwell, 1992, p. 437). He felt it is necessary to conduct research which would enhance practice in order to maximise life long learning outcomes for children in the musical element of rhythm.

Structure of thesis

Following this introduction to the study, Chapter Two, the Literature Review, provides an overview of research relating to developmental theories in music education which incorporates the foundations of research in music education and the developmental psychology of music including reference to musical intelligence acknowledging the cognitive, physical and affective factors. Next the theories related to rhythm development are expanded in relation to Orff, Dalcroze, Gordon, Kodaly, Yamaha and the three views of rhythm development that resulted including the spiral model, Serafine’s view on music as cognition, and the symbol system approach. The final aspect addressed in this chapter is the teaching strategies which are used to enhance rhythm development including singing, the use of instruments, movement, listening skills and scaffolding.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology and collection of data. The method of research used is the case study method with interviews and observations forming the basis of the analysis of the cases. This chapter also includes a brief discussion on the role of the researcher and the considerations that are a result of the use of the case study method. An overview of the observations of the four cases is then developed.

Lastly the ethical procedures considered in the planning and undertaking of the thesis is explained.

In Chapter Four the data collected are analysed in terms of the research question. Discussion of the main findings of the research is included and identifies common processes used to teach rhythm in the junior primary grades between the cases interviewed and observed. Fifteen teaching strategies were identified as being the major ways that the cases enhanced junior primary students' rhythm development. It is such strategies which form a best practice teaching model.

The final chapter, Chapter Five draws conclusions from the results of the findings of this case study research in relation to the fifteen identified teaching strategies. Then the implications for teachers based on the findings of the research are discussed. These are followed by recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significant research, which focuses on music education and the related developmental theories, and research into rhythm development are reviewed in this chapter. Also reviewed is research into effective strategies for teaching music and for teaching rhythm to students in the junior years of primary school. This chapter provides the basis for the research conducted in this thesis, identifying the need for research around the topic of rhythm education in junior primary students.

Developmental theories and music education

A variety of music education research has been founded on the writings of Sidney Pressey, Frederick Skinner and Jean Piaget, as their research is specifically related to the enhancement of musical concepts through their studies of behaviour. According to Cady and Schneider, research that is relevant to music education is “related to the overall development, analysis [and] evaluation of the music education program” (1965, pp. 33–34). Such research covers the teacher, the student, the teaching-learning process, the contrasting elements and the music education program (Colwell, 1992, p. 49). These research foundations have influenced the developmental theories of music teaching and learning, based on the schema theory, social learning theory, information processing theory, skill theory, ecological theory, and ethological theory (Colwell, 1992, p. 377). This research into music education provides insights into the strategies that enhance music development.

Piaget's developmental theory in particular has had three direct influences on the developmental psychology of music. As stated by Colwell (1992, p. 378), the first is the idea that development proceeds according to a series of qualitatively different stages, which occur universally. This idea has had a profound influence on theory and practice in psychology and education, and it has led to specific proposals about artistic development as seen in Swanwick and Tillman's (1986) theory of musical development and Parson's (1987) theory of aesthetic development. The other two direct influences of Piaget's theory have been in the explanation of symbolic development and in studies of music conservation. Piaget's account of the changes that take place in pre-schoolers' thinking is based on the development of what he calls the symbolic function, which manifests itself in areas such as language, drawings, and make-believe play. A considerable body of research has been carried out in what has become known as "music conservation". This field was pioneered by Zimmerman (cited in Colwell, 1992, p. 378) and is based on the application of Piaget's concept of conservation according to which young children gradually acquire the understanding that two properties of a concrete object can covary to produce an invariant third property to music. Thus "Piaget and other developmentalists have contributed to the emphasis on concrete experiences and the activity approach in elementary music as well as to a differentiation of teaching approaches at successful grade levels" (Colwell, 1992, p. 594). Research then focused on applying Piaget's principles to musical intelligence.

Zimmerman (1982) outlines Piaget's stages and theorizes that musical intelligence might develop along similar lines. Zimmerman (cited in Pflederer, 1964) and Sechrest and Zimmerman (1968) developed a variety of tasks to test conservation of tonal and

rhythmic patterns in the face of deformation by changes in tone colour, tempo, harmony, rhythm, contour or interval (cited in Colwell, 1992, p. 638). Results suggest that rhythmic conservation as tested by this measure is more a function of age than training. Piaget's emphasis on concrete experiences and an activity approach remains undisputed.

Although Gardner (1982) acknowledged the power of Piagetian theory as a developmental theory, he critiqued some of that theory in terms of its limited definition of thought and lack of examination of the quality of thought. He hypothesised that artistic thinking combines affect and cognition (or feelings and thought) and that artistic behaviours consist of systems of marking, receiving, and feeling. His early research focused on the use of symbols by children and the meaning of artistic symbols for them (Colwell, 1992, p. 638). Through considering affective, physical and cognitive development, the child's educational needs can be most appropriately catered for.

Bentley (1975) considered music education to be likened to a triangle of experiences, broad-based and then narrowing towards the apex, but never closing to one single peak. Hence in the junior primary years of schooling a large range of musical experiences should be used, gradually becoming more specific as the children's musical interests become more defined. Within these broad based experiences Bentley claimed "since music is movement of sound in time, it is not unnatural that children should indulge in active participation. Thus for most of the time music education is devoted to active participation through singing, moving to music and playing instruments" (1975, p. 32).

Theories of rhythm development

In the decades following the 1960's there has been provision of experiences for some children based on the approaches of Karl Orff (Saliba, 1991), Zoltan Kodaly (Chosky, 1974; Szonyi, 1973; Vajada, 1974), Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (Bachmann, 1991; Gell, 1996; Pope, 1996; Spector, 1990) and most recently Edwin Gordon (Colwell, 1992, p. 594). Ashley (1986) declared that an examination of rhythm training in music reveals that the methodologies of Orff, Kodaly, Gordon, Dalcroze, and the Yamaha teaching method use activities such as exploration, imitation, improvisation, gross motor movement and creativity to develop rhythm skills. Most of the research investigating rhythm has focused on rhythmic abilities and age-related responses to rhythm.

The work of Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze and Gordon has resulted in three main theories of musical development as described in Swanwick and Tillman (1986). The first model, the spiral model is based on an analysis of a sample of data that suggested there are distinct age-related trends in the nature of compositions. Thackray's studies on rhythmic abilities in children show to a certain extent that rhythmic abilities can be improved by training that is age related as shown in the studies conducted by Swindle (1913), Henderson (1931) and Coffman (1951), (all cited in Thackray, 1972, p. 78). On this basis theorists proposed a general model of musical development that is based on the detailed characterisation of typical compositions at each of several broad age levels. Swanwick and Tillman (1986) outlined the musical developmental sequence beginning with mastery, in which children are dealing with mastery as a primary way of conceptualising the simple sensory response to and control of sound. The second developmental stage is concerned with imitation, where children attempt to represent or illustrate aspects of the world about them by musical means. The third is based on

imaginative play, in which the child makes a creative musical contribution rather than merely imitating what already exists. The fourth developmental level is that of metacognition, which refers to children's increasing awareness of their own musical thinking and experience (Colwell, 1992, p. 380).

The second is Serafine's (1986) theory. Serafine's radical view on 'music as cognition' describes a new theory that is based on the postulation of a set of core cognitive processes that are present in musical composing, performing and listening (Colwell, 1992, p. 381). These processes are the temporal process, which is based on succession and simultaneity and the nontemporal process, which are the formal properties of the musical material. Serafine claimed that cognition in music is an active and constructive process.

The third model is the symbol system approach where Gardner's (1982) theory centres on the acquisition and use of symbols, where the symbols that are used in different disciplines such as mathematics, language or music are organised into different systems. These are either denotational or expressive to different degrees and they vary in the precision of their correspondence with the real world (Colwell, 1992, p. 383). Aspects of this research are currently incorporated into the education system and are used in the teaching of rhythm.

The study of rhythm abilities in children includes both "perception and performance" (Colwell, 1992, p. 386). Zimmerman (1986) declared that although a task can be in either category, for a rhythm pattern to be performed it first must be perceived and/or conceptualised. This examination of general developmental theories reveals that

motor development is progressive and age related, an indication that maturation is an important part of the process. Colwell stated “there is some evidence to suggest that developmental sequence in rhythmic concepts [is] from beat to rhythm, pattern to meter” (1992, p. 387). A substantive body of research has been conducted on the effect of tempo on listening to music and ways in which children represent rhythms, but there appears to be too little data on the ways in which rhythm is taught most effectively in order to enhance and facilitate developing rhythm skills.

Teaching strategies and rhythm development

This section aims to identify teaching strategies which are used in developing children’s concepts in the applications of rhythm learning. Anderson and Lawrence identify nine criteria in the structuring of musical learning for the classroom. They are set out below.

1. Make what you teach meaningful- you should emphasise activities, which closely relate to things children perceive as interesting and meaningful.
2. Organise material sequentially- develop a successful sequence of activities.
Arrange learning experiences into a logical continuum, carefully linking each step with preceding and succeeding steps.
3. Experience music before labelling it- the child should have experiences with sounds by singing, playing instruments, listening to fast and slow tempos, or loud and soft dynamics before being asked to place those labels on these musical events.
4. Use a conceptual approach to music learning- that involves students developing the ability to give a common name or response to a class of stimuli varying in

appearance. Teachers using a conceptual approach focus learning on certain fundamental ideas considered basic to understanding music, for example, rhythm.

5. Design learning experiences with a spiral approach- where material is organised so that there is a systematic return to concepts at increasing levels of sophistication.
6. Use a multisensory approach to learning- students learn through a combination of their senses.
7. Use a multicultural approach to learning- music and the arts from different cultures contribute to our understanding of both others and ourselves.
8. Provide reinforcement- children seek to be successful at whatever they undertake and teachers need to construct music lessons that include effective rewards.
9. Teach for transfer- teachers must make a concerted attempt to encourage students to relate and use what they have previously learned to that which they are currently studying (1998, p. 8).

These nine criteria form a basis for a general approach for the music teacher to effectively teach children musical concepts with maximum success. Specific teaching strategies for the development of rhythm will now be addressed.

Singing plays a fundamental role in the musical development of the child. As it provides “a rich storehouse of musical and literary treasures” (Anderson & Lawrence, 1998, p. 85). Children should learn the musical concept of rhythm through the pieces that they perform. Therefore, the songs that children sing may form the basis of the rhythmic learning that is to follow. The words of songs match the rhythms of the song, which helps to provide a conceptual bridge for the children.

In music lessons instruments are used as a motivating tool. As with singing, playing instruments involves students directly in making music. Hood highlights the importance of the use of instruments in music lessons, stating “the playing of rhythm instruments constitutes an important part of the basic rhythmic experience that children should have in the elementary school” (1970, p. 14). Many percussion instruments are used to play rhythm for example, drums, tambourines, claves and triangles. The use of instruments in the music classroom (Hackett & Linderman, 1997) helps the students to practice rhythms as an alternative to using their bodies.

Research in music education has indicated that a sense of rhythm is best developed in association with the use of movement. Carl Orff's approach to music education for the child begins with the premise that feeling precedes intellectual understanding.

Raebeck and Wheeler also confirm the importance of movement in developing rhythm, “it is through the rhythm of the child's speech and movement that we can best encourage him [her] to explore music” (1985, p. 3). Gordon asserts “rhythm has its basis in movement” (1993, p. 155). Therefore in considering the literature around the development of rhythm, the role that movement plays in its development is vital.

Children can be taught to listen to the expressive use of the elements of music such as rhythm. Campbell indicates that music education is an “amalgam of experiences that includes singing, moving, listening, playing instruments and creating” (1991, p. 12).

Draper, Peery and Peery also indicate the importance of listening activities as one of the four areas of comprehensive musicianship “composing, listening, performing and intellectualising” (1987, p. 192). Regelski (1981) also highlights the importance of listening activities. It is important for the teacher to be clear with the students about

the focus of the listening experience, hence carefully and creatively planning steps that will contribute to learning.

According to Vygotsky, “instruction usually precedes development. The child acquires certain habits and skills in a given area before he learns to apply them consciously and deliberately” (1986, p. 184). Vygotsky felt that children could progress beyond their level of mental development, but only with assistance from a teacher who pitched materials at a level just beyond the students’ present mental development to the ‘zone of proximal development’. As Bruner also confirms, the scaffolding that is provided “allows the student to grow in independence as a learner” (cited in Woolfolk, 1998, p. 47). Music learning arises from the provision of “new information or experiences and then from the learners personal discovery or construction of meaning” (Regelski, 1981, p. 354).

The role of instruction, learning and scaffolding will underpin this research. The focus is on the role of instructional strategies in developing rhythm skills and concepts and the extent and type of scaffolding provided by the teacher that directs and influences student learning. The research discussed in this section includes Anderson and Lawrence’s (1998) nine criteria for musical learning and an emphasis on the teaching strategies specifically related to rhythm development, that of, singing, the use of instruments, movement, listening, and scaffolding (Regelski, 1981). This research has formed the basis for the framework in which the teaching practices of the cases are analysed, which is in terms of the teacher, students, curriculum documents and the context of the school. Although certain teaching practices have been identified as they relate to music teaching in general and rhythmic development specifically, a clearly

defined model for enhancing rhythm development in junior primary students is needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines how the research was undertaken. It details the research method used, that of case study where the cases were interviewed and observed. The limitations and strengths of the case study method are delineated. Also included are the detailing of data collection, the role of the researcher and the ethical procedures considered in the research. A description of the teachers who were involved in the case study is then expanded upon.

Why use the case study method?

According to Bassey “educational research is critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational action” (1999, p. 39). The method of data collection employed in this research is educational case study (Atkinson, Delamont & Hamersley, 1988; Bartlett, 1994; Jackson, 1993; Jacob, 1987; Minnis, 1985; Tripp, 1985). Stake defines case study as

... the study of a single case or bounded system, it observes naturalistically and interprets high-order interrelationships within the observed data. Results are generalizable in that the information given allows readers to decide whether the case is similar to theirs. Case studies explore the context of individual instances (1994, p. 237).

This method of data collection has been chosen for this study because it is an effective way of gathering data on the teaching practices of teachers in the classroom, while also including the richness of detail of the case. Burns advocates the use of case study “when a rich descriptive real life holistic account is required that offers insights and illuminates meanings which may in turn become tentative hypothesis for further research, possibly in a more quantitative mode” (1997, p. 385). It is for these reasons

that the case study method was used as the method of data collection. Burns goes on to explain the reasons why a researcher would use the case study method:

- case studies are valuable as preliminaries to major investigations;
- case studies may be located that are typical of many other cases;
- they may provide anecdotal evidence that illustrates more general findings;
- a case study may refute a universal generalisation- a single case can represent a significant contribution to theory building and assist in re-focusing the direction of future investigations in the area;
- it is preferred when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated; and
- a case study may be valuable in its own right as a unique case (1997, pp. 365-366).

Case study is the preferred methodology when the richness of observation of unique cases is sought. Cohen and Manion argue that the purpose of case study “is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomenon that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs” (1994, p. 107). It is this ability to intensively study a case to provide insight into other cases that makes the case study so valuable in identifying the teaching practices that teachers use to enhance rhythm development in junior primary students.

Through interviewing teachers and observing rhythm lessons, this research examines real life professional practice and therefore has maximum relevance to practising teachers. According to Bassey, educational case study is “concerned to enrich the thinking and discourse of educators...by the development of educational theory or by

refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of evidence” (1999, p. 28). In brief, the aim of this research is to collect relevant data through the case study method that will be valuable in illuminating and improving teaching practices for junior primary rhythm lessons.

Limitations and strengths of the case study method

Burns outlines a range of limitations and strengths of the case study method, which were considered in the conduct of this research.

Limitations of case study method include:

- owing to the objective nature of qualitative data and its origin in single contexts it is difficult to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity;
- time required for data collection, analysis and interpretation;
- possible biases from the viewpoints of both researcher and participant, therefore they must be identified; and
- there is very little evidence for scientific generalisations.

Strengths of case study method include:

- qualitative model of inquiry is characterised by methodological eclecticism and hypothesis free orientation and implicit acceptance of the natural scheme of things;
- researcher gains an insider’s view of the field, this proximity to the field often allows the evaluator to see (and document) the qualities of educational interaction too often missed by the scientific, more positivist enquirer; and
- of benefit to practitioner (1997, pp. 13-14).

Real life events, which are most relevant to professional practice, are effectively examined through the case study methodology. Burns argues that “the case study

allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events ... we want to find out what goes on within that complex bounded system” (1997, p. 365). The strengths of the case study method are clearly beneficial based on the purpose of the research being conducted. Owing to the researcher’s emphasis on identifying teaching practices which enhance rhythm development in junior primary students, the detailed study of cases in order to provide an eclectic view of teaching practices which occur in the classroom is the most suitable methodology.

Data collection

This section details the process of data collection involved in the research. The initial focus is on the identification of the participants in the research. This is followed by an explanation of the open-ended interview and related research surrounding the strengths and weaknesses of this data collection method. Next the method of observation is detailed as related to the cases and the strengths and weaknesses of this method are expanded on. Finally a summary of the two forms of data collection is included.

Participants in the study were initially identified through sending invitations of interest to all of the schools in the South West of Western Australia (see Appendix 1, p. 57). From the feedback the researcher then contacted the participants and explained the research and the type of lesson the researcher wished to observe. From this contact the researcher selected three music specialists and one classroom teacher to be the participants in the research (see Appendix 2, p. 58). Those teachers were chosen as they represented a variety of teaching environments, hence providing a broad basis for the research findings to be drawn from.

Interview

Prior to commencing the observations of lessons the researcher conducted an open-ended interview (see Appendix 3, p. 59) with the teachers being observed. Yin declared “one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (1994, p. 84) and therefore the researchers interview questions should be aimed to gather information about the teacher, the school in general and the students who attend it, in order to contextualise the research findings. The teachers were given a written summary of the research (see Appendix 4, p. 60). After this initial interview, the teachers were observed and were re-interviewed to clarify what was observed and their purposes and interpretations of the lesson. Through the interview process the participants in the research were able to clarify events and perspectives to ensure the validity of the observations.

The interviews that took place were open-ended. Gillham notes that open-ended interviews have “just a few key open questions” (2000, p. 60). Yin identifies the advantages and disadvantages of the open-ended interview which are useful in determining the appropriateness of this method of data collection.

Strengths of interviews:

- targeted- focuses directly on case study topic;
- insightful- provides perceived causal inferences.

Weaknesses of interviews:

- bias due to poorly constructed questions;
- response to bias;
- inaccuracies owing to poor recall; and
- reflexivity- interviewee gives what the interviewer wants to hear (1994, p. 80).

The data collection method of an open-ended interview allowed the researcher to gain specific information about the field that she was studying. Yin states, “overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most cases are about human affairs” (1994, p. 85). The researcher gained a clear understanding of the teachers’ perspective on what was happening in the classroom, and the teaching practices that the cases favoured to enhance rhythm development in junior primary students.

Observation

The main form of data collection was the observation of four primary school teachers (three music specialists and one classroom teacher) teaching rhythm to Year One or Year Two classes. Hence the rhythm content of each lesson was recorded as the researcher observed the lesson. This enabled the researcher to draw parallels between teachers. All four schools are located in the South West region of Western Australia. Three music specialists and one classroom teacher were chosen to show how rhythm is taught in the selected educational settings.

Two lessons by each teacher in total were observed in Year One and/ or Year Two classes. These observations spanned two weeks. Each teacher was observed on a separate day. The researcher observed and recorded the aspects of the lesson indicated in the observation record sheet (see Appendix 5, p. 62). They included aspects of the teachers’ teaching and the students’ activities and achievements based on relevant curriculum documents. With the change in education approaches it was pertinent to incorporate the relevant aspects of the Curriculum Framework (Western Australia Curriculum Council, 1998) and the Outcomes and Standards Framework (Education

Department of Western Australia, 1998) to identify what teaching approaches and strategies were being used in the observed settings.

Gillham argues that structured observation has three main elements, that is, “watching what people do, listening to what they say and sometimes asking them clarifying questions” (2000, p. 45). It is useful to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the open-ended interview and structured observation. Yin identifies the advantages and disadvantages of direct observation which are useful in determining the appropriateness of this method of data collection.

Strengths of direct observations:

- reality- covers events in real time;
- contextual- covers context of event.

Weaknesses of direct observations:

- time-consuming;
- selectivity- unless broad coverage;
- reflexivity- event may proceed differently because it is being observed; and
- cost- hours needed by human observers (1994, p. 80).

Through observing the teaching practices that the cases used when teaching junior primary students rhythm the researcher gained insight into the practices that occur in classrooms. Yin states “observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied” (1994, p. 87). From this data the researcher was able to identify teaching practices that teachers use to enhance rhythm development.

Therefore, the methodology incorporated two forms of data collection, interview and observation, which were recorded on tape. These two forms of data collection provided a comprehensive framework for the analyses of the cases. It was through the use of these two methods of data collection that information about the cases was analysed in terms of a descriptive framework to organise the information about the case study.

The role of the researcher

It is necessary in case study research to consider the role of the researcher in the research, as there is an epistemological relationship when engaging in case study research (Bassey, 1999). The researcher brings to research a complex background that has shaped the research. According to Lather, the integrity and validity of the research stimulates a “self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action” (1986, p. 268). This is achieved through the process of ensuring that the meanings of the research are “contextually grounded” (Mishler, 1986, p. 117). Through the use of interviews and observation the presentation of the cases are grounded in contextual analysis. Reflexivity within the observations is an issue faced by the researcher. To ensure that the observations reflect real teaching, the researcher stressed to the participants in the research the importance of teaching how they would normally teach. The researcher is aware that the case study fundamentally explores the “context of individual instances” (Stake, 1985, p. 277). Hence through the research process the researcher continually engaged in critical thinking (Sultana, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992) concerning her role in the research.

The teachers

The following section provides a brief profile on the four teachers involved in this case study. Information presented was gained from interviews and observations of the participants.

Mrs Strong, Gantheaume Primary School

Mrs Strong was classroom trained but has been a music specialist for fourteen years. Her teaching focus in the classroom is singing. Gantheaume Primary School is located in a state-housing suburb, with approximately one fifth of the school population being Aboriginal. Many of the children had had very little exposure to music prior to entering school and therefore the lessons were mainly based on informal rhythm activities that were highly motivational. The classroom was a large open room with no furniture except for shelving for the instruments and other teaching equipment. This highlighted the hands on approach to music education that Mrs Strong applied to her teaching. The pin up boards around the classroom had posters and teaching aids that helped to establish the environment for musical learning. Her teaching was either whole class or small group, where the children were involved in learning about music through movement and songs. Mrs Strong used commercially produced tapes and compact discs to enhance the children's musical learning. The children responded positively to the variety of the performance techniques used on the tapes and compact discs, for example, sound effects. The children were very keen to participate in these rhythm lessons, and were enthusiastic. The learning environment that Mrs Strong had established was positive and the children displayed high achievements in their rhythmic ability.

The first lesson observed was in a Year Two class on the 24th of November. The children were keen to begin the music lesson as they excitedly entered the classroom. Mrs Strong told the children that the aim of this lesson was to explore beat and rhythm through some of their favourite songs. Mrs Strong visibly enjoyed using action songs including *Kangaroo Skippy Roo* (ti-ti taa ti-ti taa), *See saw* (taa taa ti-ti taa), *Go home all my ducks and geese* (ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti taa), *Blue bells* (taa taa ti-ti taa), *Fuzzy Wuzzy* (ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti), *Grandma Grandma* (taa taa taa taa) and *Miss Mary Mac* (taa ti-ti taa saa). These songs were used in combination with the story of the rhythm people who talked by clapping the rhythms of their words, and earth people who clapped the beat to teach her students about rhythm and beat respectively.

The second lesson was with the same Year Two class on the 30th of November. This lesson was a continuation of the first lesson that the researcher observed. Mrs Strong's teaching had a clear focus on developing the students' concepts of beat and rhythm through using action songs and games. The children responded enthusiastically to the singing of action songs and games including *Doctor Knickerbocker*, *Mr Sun* (taa taa taa saa), *Blue bells* (taa taa ti-ti taa), *See the funny clown* (taa taa ti-ti taa), *Old mother witch* (taa ti-ti taa saa), *Grandma Grandma* (taa taa taa taa), rhythm train clapping and attention clapping. On one of the walls was a diagram of a train with many carriages. When the students played the rhythm train clapping game Mrs Strong put pre-made four beat rhythm cards into the carriages. The children then clapped the rhythms on the train. The rhythm patterns included ti-ti taa ti-ti taa, ti-ti taa taa saa, ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti taa and taa taa taa saa. Attention clapping is when the teacher claps a four beat rhythm to gain the students attention and the children repeat the rhythm.

Mrs Acton, Gibb River Primary School

Mrs Acton began her music teaching career as a classroom teacher who did some relief teaching in music and soon was given a music specialist position. Mrs Acton plays the guitar and her teaching approach focuses on children participating in music activities with enthusiasm. She views self-motivation as the key to a productive learning environment. Gibb River Primary School is located in a new middle class suburb that has a transient population with new children enrolling weekly. Most of the children's exposure to rhythm is based on movement, nursery rhymes and television programs including Play School and Sesame Street. The classroom is a large open room with photos of children from that school participating in music activities in the school and in the community being liberally displayed. The music room has desks and chairs that are pushed to the corner of the room, reflecting Mrs Acton's belief that children must be engaged in activities in order to be motivated to learn in music. Mrs Acton's teaching approach was systematic as she always established the requirements of each activity prior to commencing lessons. Gauging the majority of the class's level paced the lessons. Her general approach to teaching is teacher directed.

The first lesson observed was a Year Two class on the 28th of November. The rhythm-based lesson focused on the rhythm patterns found in the song *Bingo* (*taa taa ti-ti taa, taa taa ti-ti ti-ti, ti-ti ti-ti taa taa*). Mrs Acton broke the song down into parts and provided the scaffolding for the children to decode the rhythms of the song. Mrs Acton allowed the children use of instruments for example castanets, maracas, tone blocks and claves to practice performing the rhythms for the song *Bingo*. The children enjoyed the use of the instruments, finding it very motivating.

The second lesson observed was a Year One class on the 29th of November. This lesson was also based on a rhythmic song, *Two in a boat* (*taa ti-ti taa saa, taa taa taa saa, taa ti-ti taa taa, taa taa taa saa*). In this lesson the children first explored the beat of the song. The lesson then progressed to clapping the rhythms of their names, in which the children were very interested. Some children found this difficult so their peers were asked to help those who were having difficulty. Once the class was satisfied that they could clap the rhythm of their names the lesson culminated with the children learning and clapping the rhythms of *Two in a boat* which included *taa ti-ti taa saa, taa taa taa saa, taa ti-ti taa taa, taa taa taa saa*.

Mrs Dawson, Annaplains Primary School

Mrs Dawson has been a music specialist for 25 years and was originally trained as a high school music specialist. She is a competent pianist and her focus in the classroom is on singing and recorder. Annaplains Primary School is a small school with children from middle class families with many parents with professional occupations. Many of the children's parents have exposed the children to a variety of music before entering school. The classroom is small with wall hangings of musical instruments and the words of songs the children are learning written on the blackboard. Mrs Dawson greets the children warmly as they enter the classroom and the children respond with excitement as their love for music class is obvious. Mrs Dawson firmly believes in linking her music program with the children's classroom learning.

The first observation at Annaplains Primary School was on the 28th of November in the morning and was a Year One class. Mrs Dawson's purpose was to teach the children about long and short sounds through the use of the song *Who's there?* (*Ti-ti*

taa taa, ti-ti ti-ti taa saa). The children played the rhythm of the words using instruments for example wood block, claves, tone block and xylophone that made long or short sounds. The children then listened to a commercially produced tape to practice deciding whether the sounds were long or short. They applied their knowledge of long and short sounds accurately. The children were required to repeat various rhythms that Mrs Dawson clapped before being dismissed.

The second lesson was the afternoon of the same day and was a Year One, Two split class. The purpose of the lesson was to learn about rhythm through the use of the Indian rhythm clock, the Tala. The lesson also included the cultural music of Africa where the children played the rhythms of the song *Banawayo* (*ti-ti taa ti-ti taa, ti-ti ti-ti saa-ah, ti-ti ti-ti taa saa*) using instruments including bells, claves, wood block and tambour. The children enjoyed performing music of other cultures, which linked to their classroom learning.

Mrs Membery, Springvale Primary School

Mrs Membery is a classroom teacher in a small farming community where the school does not have a music specialist. She is a Year One teacher with a keen interest in music. She plays the piano and feels that rhythm is fundamental to music learning. Mrs Membery often integrates the children's music learning with their regular classroom activities. Her approach to music is student centred with the students and herself negotiating the learning that is to take place. Therefore music learning is mostly an extension of the classroom learning and is contextualised and related to the students' interests. Mrs Membery has a warm and nurturing approach to her teaching.

The first lesson observed at Springvale Primary School was on the 27th of November. The purpose of the lesson was to revise rhythm and beat and for the children to be able to distinguish between the two by feeling the difference in a fun way. All children were willing participants in the rhythm activities and showed a clear enjoyment of the tasks. The children practiced feeling the beat and rhythm through clapping, stamping and playing the rhythms of songs including *Bingo (taa taa ti-ti taa)* and *See saw (taa taa ti-ti taa)* on instruments including bongos, lollipop drums and claves.

The second lesson was on the 4th of December. In this lesson the children decoded the rhythms of Christmas theme words Reindeer Reindeer (taa taa taa taa), Big fat Santa Claus (taa taa ti-ti taa), Christmas tree Christmas tree (ti-ti taa ti-ti taa), and Ham and turkey ham and turkey (ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti). The lesson also included using instruments such as lollipop drums, claves, bongo drums, wood blocks and floor toms to play the rhythms of the song *Tinga Layo (Come little donkey come- taa ti-ti ti-ti taa)*. The children's excitement about Christmas was captured and used to promote enthusiasm in the practicing of rhythms in this lesson.

Ethical procedures

The ethical procedures, which guided the process and conduct of the execution of this research, were categorised as follows:

Harm

No harm came to the participants in the research. Data collected and analysed have been and are kept secure and private. The researcher ensured that the data presented

was not taken out of context and that no part of significance was excluded from the study.

Consent

Consent for the study in schools and classes was sought from the principal and teachers who were involved in the study. Information given prior to consent included the nature and methods of the research, its purposes, any risks run by the participants, and the likely social and personal consequences of its publication and other factors, which might reasonably have been expected to influence their willingness to participate.

Deception and secrecy

The participants were made aware of the research purpose and were asked for their informed consent. They were free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality

Participants remained anonymous. Their privacy was protected by the removal of identifying names and descriptions, and replaced with pseudonyms.

General

Participants were informed about any significant differences that may have impinged on the researchers impartiality in the planning, conduct and reporting of the research.

The ethical issues that surround educational research are of vital importance to consider. The aspects that the researcher has considered include harm, consent, deception and secrecy, confidentiality and general ethical considerations. It is “a requirement of education research that procedures should be in place to ensure that no harm occurs as a result of the study” (Bibby, 1997, p. 2). The researcher at all times was aware of the ethical considerations and upheld appropriate conduct.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSES

The data analyses are centred on the observation of rhythm lessons which were based on the analyses of aspects of the teachers teaching, the students activities and achievements based on relevant curriculum documents (see Appendix 5, p. 62). The observations were tape recorded and then transcribed. Information was collated as a whole and common themes in the data gathered were analysed in terms of the research question, relating to what teaching strategies were evident in the observations. Fifteen processes were identified as common teaching strategies used to teach rhythm to Year One and Year Two children, and included: the use of rhythmic songs; the use of rhythmic games; progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms; concrete to abstract application activities; activities that are developmentally appropriate; relevant activities; practical work; modelling; scaffolding; use of visual teaching aids; problem solving strategies; repetition; gaining the students prior knowledge; positive and specific feedback; and establishing the framework for success. From the elaboration of these processes a clear understanding of how to approach a rhythm-based lesson was formed.

Rhythmic songs

The place and value on the use of songs in the observations was clearly evident. Mrs Strong, Mrs Acton, Mrs Dawson and Mrs Membury all used rhythmic songs as a method of contextualising the students' learning in a motivational way. According to Hood, "folk and traditional games and dances, including singing games, can provide experience with many different types of rhythmic movement" (1970, p. 11). The

teachers observed used rhythmic songs as the basis for their lessons. As an example, at the beginning of the lesson the children learned a song then engaged in various activities that developed their ability to be able to play the rhythm of the song's words. The rhythms which were studied in the lesson were devised from the context of the rhythmic song, which resulted in contextualised and purposeful learning. The rhythmic songs that the researcher observed included *Bingo* which Mrs Acton (28/11) and Mrs Membrey's (27/11) classes studied. Mrs Dawson's class learnt the rhythms for the song *Who's there?* (28/11) as they focused on using instruments including xylophone, wood block, claves and tone block. The rhythmic songs that Mrs Strong used (24/11) were *Grandma Grandma*, *Miss Mary Mac* and *Blue bells*. The children responded positively to the use of songs as the basis of lessons as it provided an intrinsically interesting method of learning about rhythm. Rhythmic songs play a vital part in the teaching of rhythm to junior primary children. It is important for teachers to choose appropriate songs that are educationally appropriate for the children's abilities and interest areas.

Rhythm games

Games are an interesting way for children to learn about rhythm. As Gordon states, "students develop perceptual rhythmic understanding primarily by engaging in eurhythmic activities" (1971, p. 85). Rhythm games enhance the attitude that learning is fun. The value of games is also highlighted by Sachs who states, "any concept could be presented in a game form as added motivation for improving skills" (1982, p. 58). Mrs Membrey (4/12) used a rhythm guessing game where she asked "What rhythm am I clapping?". She would clap a rhythm, for example taa taa ti-ti taa, and ask the children to look at a selection of words and decide on which one she was

clapping, in the case given 'Big fat Santa Claus' would be the correct response. Mrs Membery (4/12) also used the game of Chinese whispers rhythm passing. The children were lined up with five children in a line. The child at the end of the line was given a four beat rhythm card and then told the child in front of them the rhythm and so on down the line until the first child said the rhythm out loud for example taa taa taa ti-ti. A rhythm game that was used by Mrs Dawson (28/11) was to repeat after the teacher four beat rhythms for dismissal. Mrs Strong (24/11) found the use of a creative four beat rhythm clapping game an enjoyable and valuable experience for the children. Here the children would be in pairs and they would take turns to clap a four beat rhythm which had not been clapped before to their partner. Mrs Strong (24/11, 30/11) and Mrs Membery (27/11, 4/12) used attention clapping where the children repeated a clapped rhythm as a sign of paying attention as a student management tool and game. The games that the researcher observed allowed the children to enjoy the process of learning the fundamental principles associated with rhythm.

Progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms

The children's bodies are a useful resource in developing their rhythmic skills. Children clap, stamp, or pat the rhythms on their body before progressing to using instruments on which to play rhythms. "Playing simple percussion instruments is one of the most satisfactory ways of providing this rhythmic experience for children. However, the child's own body is recognised as his first rhythm instrument" (Hood, 1970, p. 52). It is important for children to feel the rhythm in their body prior to extending it to an instrument. For example Mrs Membery (4/12) used this progression in her teaching, "come little donkey come, can we do it on our knees like this taa ti-ti ti-ti taa...that's very good and I think that means that we can play some musical

instruments". When children use their bodies first, the use of instruments becomes an intrinsic motivation to make practising rhythms enjoyable for them.

Concrete to abstract application activities

In the rhythm lessons observed many of the teachers directed the children's learning from concrete experiences to abstract concepts. It is essential to always follow the well established teaching and learning sequence of concrete to abstract (Bana, Farrell, Gleeson, McIntosh and Swan, 2000). Generally, children were engaged in learning which was practical and then the lesson progressed to a less hands-on focus. For example, Mrs Dawson (28/11am) began her lesson by using a song as the basis for learning about long and short sounds. The children sang the song and then played the rhythm using their bodies and then they used instruments. Once the children showed a good understanding of long and short sounds the lesson became more abstract "Now we're going to listen to some short and long sounds on the tape, we're going to see if we can discover which sounds are long and which sounds are short. OK. Now I'll put the tape on". This tape was a commercially produced tape that the children listened to and voted on whether they thought the sound was mostly long or mostly short. In order to teach children in a manner that ensures maximum learning outcomes the progression from concrete to abstract applications is fundamental.

Developmentally appropriate activities

Designing learning activities which are developmentally appropriate incorporates the children's readiness factor for the learning about to take place. Regelski states- "readiness involves all the prior experiences, learnings (concepts developed as a result of experience) and attitudes of the learner that affect his [her] ability to complete a

task" (1975, p. 64). Hence, it is necessary for the lesson to develop in a logical format. The teacher must be aware of when the students have grasped a concept and are ready to move on to the next aspect of the lesson. The general progression of learning in the researcher's observations of rhythm-based lessons was a progression from learning a song, working on beat and then developing the rhythm of the song they had just learnt. For example Mrs Acton (29/11) said, "Now when we sing this song we're going to just gently rock back and forth just like the waves are gently rocking us. So we're going to try something different; now we're going to put the beat on our knees when we sing that song. Now we're going to go back to the song that we were doing, we're going to use the words of the song to figure out the rhythms of the song". The teacher must be sensitive to the children's readiness for the rhythmic learning that takes place in all lessons. Because Mrs Acton was sensitive to the children's cognitive progressions the children were able to meet the educational demands of the lesson as she was sensitive to the children's comprehension of the task.

Relevant activities

The teacher's aim in teaching is to continually make learning relevant to the children's needs. Askew states that the relevance of learning is most effective when "pupils are immersed in real life experiences" (1993, pp. 44-45). This is achieved by relating activities to the children's areas of interest for example, when clapping rhythms Mrs Acton (29/11) and Mrs Membery (27/11) used the rhythms of the children's names, which increased the relevance of the activity for the children. Also their presentation of learning was appropriate to the age group that the teacher was teaching. For example, Mrs Strong (24/11) taught junior primary children about rhythm and beat by framing the concepts in the form of a story about aliens called the

rhythm people who clap the rhythm and earth people who clap the beat: “Now we’re going to see if you can do it like earth people, ‘cause earth people only have a heartbeat and if they go like this ti-ti they’re dead...Moon talk, is when nothing was coming from them, they were putting their words into their hands”. Also children of this age enjoy action songs where they can be active in their learning, for example, Mrs Strong (24/11) used *Kangaroo Skippy Roo*, *Go home all my ducks and geese*, *Blue bells*, *Fuzzy Wuzzy*, *Grandma Grandma* and *Miss Mary Mack*. In junior primary classrooms the teaching of rhythm is based on activities that are relevant to the children’s level of development and areas of interest, often determined by the teacher.

Practical work

Practical work includes activities which require the children to be heavily involved in their learning through active participation. Such activities apply the concepts which the children are learning about, through the reinforcement of learning by performance. In some of the observations, a clear emphasis was on the children participating in practical activities. Mrs Acton (29/11) had the children feeling the difference between a slow and fast beat- “Sometimes you have a slow beat and sometimes you have a fast beat. Let’s pretend that the beat is fast and we’ll sing that song again [children sing *Two in a boat* faster]. Now we’ll sing it very slowly [children sing *Two in a boat* very slowly]”. The teacher clarifies the concept of slow and fast beat by the children clapping to the fast and slow beat. Therefore the concept was more likely to be fully understood by the students. Another example included Mrs Dawson’s class (28/11pm) learning about music of other cultures, in this instance about the Indian Tala, by carrying out the way of practicing the rhythm music by clapping on beats one, three and eight and waving on beat six as guided by the rhythm clock. Without the children

doing what the Indian children do with a rhythm clock their understanding would have been greatly diminished. Askew states "learning occurs through action" (1993, pp. 44-45). It is through the students being engaged in hands-on concept application activities that their ability to demonstrate rhythmic ability will improve.

Modelling

Teachers model the learning that children are about to be engaged in to assist them to understand what they are required to do. Woolfolk defines modelling as "changes in behaviour, thinking or emotions that occur through observing another person- a model" (1998, p. 229). In the researcher's observations, modelling often took the form of showing the children what they were meant to do before expecting them to do it. Mrs Acton (28/11, 29/11), Mrs Dawson (28/11 am) and Mrs Membery (27/11) often in a rhythm-based lesson clap the rhythms before the children were asked to clap them. For example, "This is how it goes Christmas Tree Christmas Tree (ti-ti taa ti-ti taa). Off you go" (Mrs Membery 4/12). The children were then able to repeat the rhythm with higher success rates than without Mrs Membery's support. Through the use of teacher modelling the children are given the conditions to achieve success in rhythm performance.

Scaffolded learning

In order to provide the children with a framework for success it is important to provide them with the scaffolding to achieve this success. Woolfolk suggests the term 'scaffolding' is when "children use this (teacher) help for support while they build a firm understanding that will eventually allow them to solve the problems on their own" (1998, p. 47). As a teacher, it is necessary to provide the structure for the

children to achieve successful learning. Mrs Acton (28/11) used a whole-of-class activity, where the group identified and practiced the rhythms of the song *Bingo* before it was expected that the children were to decide on the rhythm cards for the song *Bingo* as individuals. In Mrs Membery's (4/12) class each Christmas theme rhythm was practiced in parts to ensure that the children were confident at clapping them before doing it without teacher support. Scaffolding can take the form of clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example, or anything else that allows the student to grow in independence as a learner.

Visual teaching aids

It is necessary to visually stimulate children with their learning. Gage (1989) highlights the importance of considering the media chosen to present musical learning and the methods used to deliver instruction. The use of visual tools to assist the learning can stimulate interest as well as serve a practical function, that of assisting the teacher to teach; for example Mrs Acton (28/11, 29/11) and Mrs Strong (30/11) used rhythm cards, Mrs Dawson (28/11pm) used a rhythm clock and Mrs Membery (4/12) used word cards. These teaching tools were visual stimulants for the child as well as aids to help the teachers to teach. Based on the researcher's observations each teacher used various visual tools to help in the presentation of musical learning.

Problem solving strategies

It is necessary to develop learners who are responsible for their own learning, and this is often achieved through the development of problem solving skills. Problem solving in a sense requires the teacher to put the responsibility for student learning back onto

the children. This teaching emphasis was evident in Mrs Acton's (28/11) teaching style as shown in this example "we're going to figure out the rest of the song- its up here somewhere, it's hidden...can anybody tell from looking up here where the first part of *Bingo* might be?" and so the lesson continues until the children have decoded the rhythms of the song *Bingo*. Mrs Acton (28/11) has placed the learning back on the children by not answering 'yes' or 'no' but by gaining a consensus from the children as she asks, "Is everybody happy with that?" This required the students to actively think about whether they agreed with their peers' choices or not, therefore they were active problem solvers in the lesson. Kohler's research provides insight into solving problems "it is a good rule in teaching sometimes to answer a question with a question, to make the pupil use his [her] brain to get insight" (cited in Franklin, 1969, p. 55). Activating the students' thinking is one task of an effective teacher.

Repetition

Repetition can play a major role in the teaching of music to children. The repeated opportunities to practice rhythms and grasp concepts provide valuable opportunities for learning. As such each of the teachers involved in this study used repetition as a key component of their teaching. Mrs Acton (28/11) used the repetition of playing the *Bingo* rhythms. Mrs Dawson (28/11 am) had her class repeating the song *Who's there?* many times until the children had correctly clapped and played the rhythm. Likewise Mrs Strong (24/11, 30/11) and Mrs Membrey (27/11, 4/12) provided many opportunities for the children in their classes to practice and perfect many of the songs to ensure their students' success. "Repetition is just as important and indispensable to the teacher. Repeated facts attract more attention than those not recapitulated"

(Franklin, 1969, p. 23). This value of repetition is clearly reinforced by the frequency, of repetition used by these music teachers in their lessons.

Prior knowledge

An important aspect of lessons which are appropriate to students learning is basing the lesson on what the students already know, and developing the lesson with this as a starting point. Gagne (1977) indicates that it is necessary to stimulate the recall of prior learning experiences when providing further learning guidance. By gaining the students' prior knowledge on the subject at hand the teacher is able to gauge the level of understanding and therefore tailor the learning to the students' needs. For example, Mrs Acton (29/11) said "Now when we were rocking before we were actually rocking to match something in the music?" A clear and confident answer by the class would indicate to the teacher that the children had a good understanding of the beat, and lessons focusing on the rhythm would be developmentally appropriate.

Positive and specific feedback

In any learning situation the skills involved in feedback are a valuable tool in developing student learning. Positive feedback played a significant factor in the teaching approaches of the teachers observed in this research. Pavlov's research indicates, "a positive teacher creates a generalised positive atmosphere about his teaching" (cited in Franklin, 1969, p. 53). Particularly the teaching styles of Mrs Dawson and Mrs Membrey reflected an attitude that improvement occurs through praise and that positive feedback and reinforcement contribute to a positive and productive learning environment. For example Mrs Membrey (27/11) said "Good. That was terrific...very nicely sung." The children responded positively to the

positive and specific praise. Feedback not only needs to be positive in intent but specific in order for children to improve through praise.

Establishing the framework for success

The optimal environment for successful participation in a lesson must be established. This requires teachers to allow for time and multiple opportunities with experiences. Thorndike's research states, "the law of readiness tells us to provide opportunities for learning so arranged as to make our pupils want to learn...the law of frequency means that a pupil must be made to practice...the application of the law of effect is naturally reward (positive effect) and punishment (negative effect)" (cited in Franklin, 1969, p. 54). For example Mrs Acton (28/11) allowed time and multiple experiences for the children in the class to identify the correct rhythm patterns in *Bingo*. This occurred first through teacher directed activity where as a whole class the rhythms for *Bingo* were decided and then the children were given time to figure out the rhythms independently. Mrs Acton said "now in front of you, you should have the four rhythm cards that you chose before...now turn and face the board ... now this is the chance for you to check to see if what you have on the floor is exactly the way you want it to be, if you need to do any changes, all right...now watch please while we clap and check the first one, then look at your own, and if you're happy with it don't do anything. Number one we have- taa taa ti-ti taa (Bingo). Look at your own. Check it. Taa taa ti-ti taa (Bingo). Any number one person who wants to change theirs this is the time to do it. OK. All number ones are happy? OK". It is evident that the complex interaction of student interest, opportunity to practice and appropriate feedback result in the successful learning of rhythmic concepts.

On the basis of the researcher's observations the processes which are listed in this chapter are the strategies which selected teachers are using to enhance rhythm development in children in junior primary. The concepts discussed in this chapter highlight the more prominent teaching practices used to teach children rhythm in Year One and Year Two based on the researcher's observations. These strategies are; the use of rhythmic songs; the use of rhythmic games; progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms; concrete to abstract application activities; activities that are developmentally appropriate; relevant activities; practical work; modelling; scaffolding; use of visual teaching aids; problem solving strategies; repetition; gaining the students prior knowledge; positive and specific feedback; and establishing the framework for success. It is interesting to note that the Curriculum Framework (Western Australia Curriculum Council, 1998) and the Outcomes and Standards Framework (Education Department of Western Australia, 1998) were not used by the cases in the planning and programming of the lessons observed, although the teaching strategies observed were consistent with relevant research on the topic of rhythm development.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarises the main teaching strategies adopted by the four teachers involved in the case study. Next is a description of the implications for teachers with regard to rhythm development training in junior primary students. Finally, some recommendations are made for further research on rhythm development based on the findings of this case study.

Study findings and conclusions

The focus of this research was on the practices which teachers used to enhance rhythm development in junior primary students. From the collection of data relating to this purpose some common teaching strategies were identified. The fifteen teaching strategies used by the observed cases were: the use of rhythmic songs; the use of rhythmic games; progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms; concrete to abstract application activities; activities that are developmentally appropriate; relevant activities; practical work; modelling; scaffolding; use of visual teaching aids; problem solving strategies; repetition; gaining the students prior knowledge; positive and specific feedback; and establishing the framework for success. These fifteen rhythm teaching processes can be applied when developing the four aspects of rhythm; duration, meter, accent and tempo.

The teaching practices identified provide a significant model for teaching rhythm to junior primary students. The literature review identified various theories including the theories of symbolic development, music conservation, musical intelligence and the

relationship between affect and cognition. These developmental theories influence the theories of rhythm development including the role that exploration, imitation, improvisation, gross motor movement and creativity play, added to the theories of age related trends, music as cognition, symbol system approach and the relationship between perception and performance. These areas lead to the further development of a teaching model incorporating nine strategies which relate to music in general and rhythmic specific strategies including singing, using instruments, movement, developing listening skills and the role that the zone of proximal development and scaffolding play. Clearly based on the study of four cases using interviews and observation the researcher was able to develop a more comprehensive and rhythmic specific model for enhancing teaching practice in rhythm development in the junior primary years of schooling.

Implications for teachers

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications are offered:

1. The use of rhythmic songs and games are fundamental to teaching rhythm to Year One and Year Two children.
2. The progression of using the body then musical instruments to perform rhythms is a useful and rewarding progression for the student.
3. Rhythm-based activities are more helpful if they progress from concrete experiences to abstract application activities.
4. The learning to take place is more effective if it is developmentally appropriate for the child. Their readiness is a factor to be ascertained before the lesson can productively progress.

5. Activities planned will be more effective if they are relevant to the child's interests and ability.
6. A clear focus on practical work in developing the musical concept of rhythm is very helpful in developing rhythm skills.
7. The teacher's teaching is enhanced when the learning is being modelled and scaffolded.
8. Visual teaching aids are an important stimulant for learning that motivates student interest.
9. Assisting students to be responsible for their own learning and developing the skills necessary to be active problem solvers promotes better long-term outcomes.
10. Repetition is an important teacher tool, which helps children to grasp concepts and participate in valuable opportunities for learning.
11. Children bring to the rhythm lesson a rich resource of rhythmic responses, which are a valuable tool to draw on in the lesson.
12. Positive and specific feedback helps the child to achieve success.
13. Allowing time and multiple opportunities to practice in a rhythm lesson establishes the framework for success.
14. Curriculum documents are a useful resource when used as the basis for music programming.

Recommendations for further research

As this is a case study involving only four groups of subjects, it is not possible to make generalisations. However, it is hoped that this study will indicate some issues which could be addressed in further research into teaching practices which enhance rhythm development in junior primary students. The findings of this study indicate

that there is much to be gained from further investigation into teaching practices in the classroom. These include:

Extending the variety of teaching strategies being observed in different educational contexts with a larger number of schools and students.

Understanding how well the students learn rhythm based on the teaching strategies identified would prove useful to the practicing teacher.

Exploring why the teachers chose to use the particular strategies they did would provide a useful teacher based reasoning behind appropriate teaching practices.

Identifying the teaching strategies for the specific elements of rhythm.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF INTEREST

Natalie Oddy

[REDACTED]

Ph:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern.

To introduce myself, I am a Bachelor of Education (Primary) Honours student who is researching the teaching of rhythm in year one and two classes.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the research and invite your school to participate. The intended research would take place from-

27th Nov – 10th Dec 2000

During this two-week period I would visit your school on two occasions and observe a Year One and Year Two music lesson. This lesson can either be with a music specialist or a generalist teacher who teaches music in their classroom. My research question focuses on how rhythm is taught in the classroom so I wish to observe a rhythm based lesson.

If members of your staff are interested in participating in the research please contact me on the details listed above.

I have a current state and national police clearance for your peace of mind.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you in the next week or so.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Oddy

APPENDIX 2

LETTER OF INVOLVEMENT

Natalie Oddy

Phone: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

During the week of the 13th – 17th of November 2000, I am available anytime to meet with you about the research observation that is to take place on two occasions during the two weeks of 27th November – 10th December 2000.

Please phone, fax or e-mail me a reply with a time and day that would be most suitable for you.

Again, may I pass on my thanks for your involvement in this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Natalie Oddy

APPENDIX 3

TEACHER INTERVIEW

Name: _____

School: _____

Contact details: _____

Teacher background in music education:

School background:

Students background:

APPENDIX 4

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH GIVEN TO CASES

Research Proposal

This research proposal has arisen from a desire to enhance the benefits of musical development, in particular rhythm, for children in junior primary classrooms. Music plays an important role in the overall development of the child as it “aids a child’s development in other areas such as overall academic achievement, ability to concentrate, creative and artistic expression, social skills and emotional stability” (Parkinson, 1989, p. 3), and therefore plays an important part in the academic curriculum. In studying teaching strategies which enhance musical development in the area of rhythm, this research will contribute to our understanding of how classroom teachers and music specialists can improve their own practice and foster children’s sense of rhythm.

Research Question

What strategies are teachers using to enhance rhythm development in junior primary students?

The aim of this research is to identify teaching strategies used to develop rhythm in junior primary classrooms. “Rhythm is that feature of music concerned with duration of sound ... rhythm therefore involves duration, meter, accent and tempo” (Spence, 1981, pp. 233-234). Research indicates that the development of creativity is most effective in the initial years of primary school in combination with best practice teaching methods. As Parkinson (1989, p. 3) indicates, “the first seven years are the most important for laying down the foundations of a musical education”. This research focuses on significant ways in which rhythm is taught and the implications for teachers. Four case studies will be conducted on teacher practice in the South West region of Western Australia. Three of the teachers will be music specialists and one will be a classroom teacher. By observing the ways in which these teachers develop rhythm, the researcher will be able to draw conclusions about teaching strategies that assist students to develop their rhythmic skills.

Significance of the Study

The researcher decided on rhythm as the element of music to focus on as it is “the most basic element of music” (Sadie & Latham, 1985, p. 17). At present there appears to be little research in the field describing the most effective ways of teaching rhythm in junior primary classrooms. Findlay (1971, p. 1) declares “of the three elements of music - rhythm, melody and harmony - rhythm has received the least attention from the theorists, yet it is indisputably the basic element without which there is no musical art”. The results of this study will aim to provide insights for music specialists and classroom teachers as to the most effective ways in which to teach children rhythm in their developmental years. Jerome Bruner, cited in Colwell (1992, p. 437), declared “the first objective of any act of learning...is that it should serve us in the future. Learning should not only take us somewhere it should allow us to go further more easily”. As such the researcher feels that it is necessary to conduct research that will enhance practice in order to maximise life long learning outcomes for children in the musical element of rhythm.

APPENDIX 5

OBSERVATION RECORD SHEET

Teacher

Teacher: _____

Age range of students: _____

Time observed: _____

What teaching approach does this teacher favour?

Background of students from teachers perspective (is this the sort of lesson that you would be doing at this time of the year with this age group of children, usually?):

What rhythms/ objective of rhythm lesson? _____

Was the objective achieved? Why/ Why not?

Teaching aids-

What did the children use?

Timing of lesson (What the teacher did, what the students did, % time ratio)

What instructional strategies were used?

What role did scaffolding play in the teaching?

Comments/ Other?

Students

Is **exploration** used? If yes, how?

Is **imitation/ rote** used? If yes, how?

Is **improvisation** used? If yes, how?

Is **gross/ fine motor movement** used?

<i>Gross</i>	<i>Fine</i>

Is **creativity** used? If yes, how?

Comments/ Other?

What did the students achieve? → Links to the Student Outcome Statements:

Key Activities:

Creation
Performance
Reflection

Skills and Processes:

Listening
Moving
Singing
Playing
Improvising
Composing
Interpreting
Arranging
Responding
Reflecting
Using New Technologies

Key Musical Elements:

Duration
Pitch
Texture
Timbre
Tempo
Dynamics
Form

Contexts:

Experiencing a wide range of music
Understanding and using different genres and styles of music forms
Range of cultures
Music from historical periods
Australian music
Music of other students
Music artists and companies

Overarching Outcomes:

Language
Numeric/ spatial
Information
Technologies
Patterns/ relationships and structures
Consequences and opportunity
Physical, biological and technical world
Cultural, geographic and historical world
Other cultures/ global
Creative activity
Personal growth
Motivation/ confidence
Rights/ responsibilities

Values:

Knowledge/ potential
Self-acceptance/ respect
Others concern/ respect
Social and civic responsibility
Environmental responsibility